

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-29 are presently active in this case, Claims 1, 18, 23, 26 and 27 are amended by way of the present amendment.

In the outstanding Official Action, Claims 1-2, 4-5, 18, 23 and 26-29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,517,294 to Ogiri et al.; Claims 3 and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Ogiri et al. in view of Japanese patent number 11-249514A to Kubota; Claims 22 and 24 were allowed and Claims 6-17 and 19-21 were indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

First, Applicants wish to thank Examiner Grainger for allowance of Claims 22 and 24, and the indication of allowable subject matter in Claims 6-17 and 19-21. However, Applicants wish to maintain Claims 6-17 and 19-21 in their present form because Applicants believe that Claim 1, from which these claims depend, patentably defines over the cited references for the reasons discussed below.

Turning now to the merits, in order to expedite issuance of a patent in this case, Applicants have amended independent Claims 1, 18, 23, 26 and 27 to clarify the patentable distinctions of the present invention over the cited references.

Specifically, as discussed on record, items 36, 38, 96A, 100A, 96B, and 100B in Figure 2 of the Ogiri et al. cleaning member do not meet the limitation of a reinforcement feature because each of these items is a feature that is separate from and not a portion of the blade holding member 44. In response to this, the Official Action takes the position that these separate parts meet the claimed language of "a reinforcement feature being arranged on the planar face portion" because the claims do not recite that "the components of the support

plate are integrally formed.”¹ To address this concern, Applicants have amended Claims 1, 18, 23, 26 and 27 to recite the reinforcement feature being “integral with and arranged on the planar face portion.” Thus, items 36, 38, 96A, 96B, 10A and 10B of Ogiri et al. do not meet reinforcement limitation of Claims 1, 18, 23, 26 and 27, and cannot anticipate these claims.

In this regard, Applicants note that the reinforcement feature being integral with the planar face cannot be considered a mere integration of separate parts that would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art under 35 U.S.C. §103. Specifically, as discussed in the Background section of Applicants’ specification, it is known in the art that undesirable noise results from conventional cleaning members. To the extent that the separate components of Ogiri et al. are directed to reducing this noise as the Official Action suggests, these separate components offer only complex mechanisms for reducing the noise. As disclosed in Applicants’ specification, use of an integral reinforcement feature such as that shown in the exemplary figures, can contribute to a reduction in noise from the cleaning member.² Thus, Applicants claimed invention eliminates this need for complex mechanisms by offering an integral reinforcement feature, which can serve as the basis for patentability.³

Regarding the rejection of Claims 3 and 25 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ogiri et al. in view of Kubota, Applicants note that this rejection relies on Ogiri et al. for teaching all of the limitations of Claims 1 and 23, and cites Kubota as teaching only a cleaning blade in a process cartridge. As Ogiri et al. fails to teach all the limitations of Claims 1, 18, 23, 26 and 27 as discussed above, the Claims 3 and 25 also patentably define over Ogiri et al. and Kubota.

Thus, Claims 1, 18, 23, 26 and 27 patentably define over the cited references. Moreover, as the remaining depending claims depend from one of these independent claims, these pending dependent claims also patentably define over the cited references.

¹ Office Action at page 5, lines 2-3.

² Applicants specification at paragraph 34 and Figures 3A-3D and associated text.

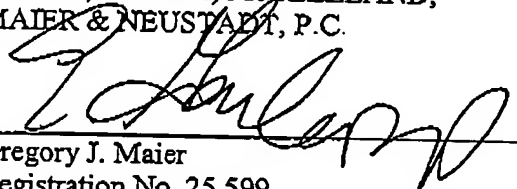
³ See MPEP §2144.04IVB citing *Schenck v. Nortron Corp.*, 713 F.2d 782, 218 USPQ 698 (Fed Cir 1983).

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Consequently, in view of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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